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SUBJECT: JUST ANOTHER DAY FOR JEM IN JEBEL MOUN

REF: NDJAMENA 123

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In two separate conversations on March 28 and 29, representatives of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) claimed it was business as usual for them in their struggle against the Government of Sudan (GoS) and in their "dedicated quest" toward negotiations. Political leadership and field commanders alike have been giving no indication of tensions between the JEM and other Darfur rebel movements or with the government of Chad. JEM continues to insist that it is serious about negotiations with the GoS, despite its belief that such negotiations need not be predicated on a ceasefire, to which JEM still refuses to adhere. JEM continues to be wary of the United Nations/African Union mediation for such negotiations and to berate the international community for not doing more to pressure the GoS to come in good faith to the negotiating table. JEM remains skeptical of UNAMID's intentions but insists it is willing to work with the peacekeeping operation, as long as it is on JEM's own terms. In short, it remains business as usual for JEM, and we should work to bring JEM in line with our push to deploy UNAMID as rapidly as possible. END SUMMARY.

JEM POL/MIL LEADERSHIP CLAIMS PRIMACY ON THE GROUND

2. (SBU) In two separate conversations with FieldOff on March 28 and 29, representatives of the political and military leadership of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) assured poloff that despite rumors of tensions between JEM and other Darfur rebel movements, JEM still reigned supreme on the ground. "People are sending messages to discredit us in the eyes of the international community," said JEM Political Chief Abdulaziz, speaking from Chad. "There is no real movement on the ground except for JEM. Other movements exist only on the Internet." [NOTE: This last bit was especially ironic coming from the movement which relies the most on a website to disseminate information about its activities. END NOTE]. JEM Field Commander and former rep to the Second Chamber of the Ceasefire Commission GEN Beshier, speaking from Jebel Moun, (where both he and Abdulaziz said the vast majority of JEM members are at the moment) described the area as calm and confirmed that there was no fighting between JEM and any other rebel movement.

3. (SBU) Insisting that JEM's political and military capacities are sound, Abdulaziz brushed aside questions about JEM's present relationship with the Government of Chad (GoC). He claimed that JEM's popular support was so substantial at the moment that it rendered unnecessary any assistance from the GoC or from any other outside source [NOTE: Abdulaziz could give no real explanation as to why, if his claims of JEM's self-sustainability were true, he was calling from N'djamena, saying only that he was "on mission." END NOTE]. Neither Abdulaziz nor GEN Beshier spoke much about the situation in Chad, other than to call on the international community to involve itself more intimately in resolving the situation. Abdulaziz reported that Chadian rebel groups were presently in Libya for talks with COL Qadhafi ahead of likely discussions with the GoC.

4. (SBU) Given JEM's apparently precarious situation on the political and military fronts, it stood to reason that it would be ready to move on to talks with the GoS, Abdulaziz explained. He dismissed rumors that JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim had decided to negotiate with the GoS at the urging of Sudanese Islamist leader Hassan al-Turabi. Abdulaziz insisted that JEM was serious about entering into negotiations with the GoS and that the only viable mediator from JEM's perspective was former SYG Kofi Annan. "The UN and AU mediators have no vision or knowledge of the parties to the Darfur conflict," Abdulaziz explained, adding that since Annan got involved in mediation in Kenya, he should have no excuse not to dKQ9*QQ#1Q Deby, of forthcoming elections and of problems in the South.

NO NEED TO PREDICATE PEACE TALKS ON CEASEFIRE

5. (SBU) Despite the lull in fighting between the GoS and JEM, Abdulaziz assessed that the GoS was not serious about Darfur peace and would seek a military solution to the Darfur crisis. He claimed

the Sudanese Armed Forces continued to increase their presence throughout West Darfur [NOTE: UNAMID Chief of Staff has acknowledged that based on GoS troop movements in West Darfur, "it looks like they are preparing to wipe out JEM once and for all." END NOTE]. JEM would accordingly be forced to defend itself, but Abdulaziz did not consider this "reality" to be at odds with JEM's stated quest for good faith negotiations. "Why does the international community assume that peace talks can't take place while fightiQQj\$